

AMENDMENT

Amendments to the Claims: Please replace all prior versions and listings of claims with the following listing of claims.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for issuing refunds for misprints of mail pieces, comprising:

generating, at a postage-issuing computer system, a unique postage indicium in response to receiving a request for a postage purchase transaction, wherein the unique postage indicium is logically linked to ~~contains~~ a unique tracking identifier to track a mail piece delivery status within the United States Postal Service (USPS);

~~indexing storing information for the postage purchase transaction with the unique tracking identifier logically linked to the unique postage indicium in a database coupled to the postage-issuing computer system, wherein the database associates information stored for the indexed postage purchase transaction with includes the unique tracking identifier to track the mail piece delivery status within the USPS and the mail piece delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier logically linked to the unique postage indicium;~~

~~retrieving [[the]] information associated with stored for the indexed postage purchase transaction from the database in response to the postage-issuing computer system receiving a refund inquiry for the postage purchase transaction, wherein the retrieved information associated with retrieved for the indexed postage purchase transaction from the database includes the mail piece delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier logically linked to the unique postage indicium; and~~

~~refunding the postage purchase transaction based on the mail piece delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier logically linked to the unique postage indicium.~~

2. **(Cancelled)**

3. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1, further comprising displaying the retrieved information associated with retrieved for the indexed postage purchase transaction from the database at the postage-issuing computer system in response to the refund inquiry for the postage purchase transaction.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the unique tracking identifier from the USPS, wherein the confirmatory delivery status information indicates whether the USPS has delivered a mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier; and
updating the mail piece delivery status associated with the indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier in the database with the confirmatory delivery status information received from the USPS.

5. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1, wherein the database further associates information stored for the indexed postage purchase transaction further includes with a date and the unique postage indicium logically linked to [[for]] the postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier.

6. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1, wherein the database further associates information stored for the indexed postage purchase transaction further includes with a date, a time, a destination zip code, a service class, a postage amount, a mail piece weight, and the unique postage indicium logically linked to [[for]] the postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier.

7. **(Cancelled)**

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the refund inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing computer system.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the refund inquiry is received from an end user computer over a communications links connecting the end user computer with the postage-issuing computer system.

10-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein refunding the postage purchase transaction based on the mail piece delivery status includes:

refunding the postage purchase transaction in response to determining that the mail piece delivery status associated with the indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier indicates that the USPS has not delivered a mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier; [[and]] or

denying the refund inquiry in response to determining that the mail piece delivery status associated with the indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier indicates that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the unique tracking identifier from the USPS in response to the USPS processing a mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier and reading the unique tracking identifier carried on the mail piece; and

updating the mail piece delivery status associated with the indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier to indicate that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier.

14. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 13, wherein refunding the postage purchase transaction based on the mail piece delivery status includes:

refunding the postage purchase transaction in response to determining that the updated mail piece delivery status associated with the indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier indicates that the USPS has not delivered the mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier; [[and]] or

denying the refund inquiry in response to determining that the updated mail piece delivery status associated with the indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier indicates that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier.

15. **(Currently Amended)** A method for issuing refunds for misprints of mail pieces, comprising:

generating, at a postage-issuing computer system, a first unique postage indicium in response to receiving a first request for a first postage purchase transaction, wherein the first unique postage indicium is logically linked to ~~contains~~ a first unique tracking identifier to track a first mail piece delivery status within the United States Postal Service (USPS);

indexing ~~storing information for~~ the first postage purchase transaction with the first unique tracking identifier logically linked to the first unique postage indicium in a database coupled to the postage-issuing computer system, wherein the database associates ~~information stored for~~ the first indexed postage purchase transaction with ~~includes~~ the first unique tracking identifier ~~to track the first mail piece delivery status within the USPS, a first date for the first postage purchase transaction, and the first mail piece delivery status associated with the first unique tracking identifier logically linked to the first unique postage indicium;~~

generating, at the postage-issuing computer system, a second unique postage indicium in response to receiving a second request for a second postage purchase transaction, wherein the second unique postage indicium is logically linked to ~~contains~~ a second unique tracking identifier to track a second mail piece delivery status within the United States Postal Service {USPS};

indexing storing information for the second postage purchase transaction with the second unique tracking identifier logically linked to the second unique postage indicium in the database, wherein the database associates information stored for the second indexed postage purchase transaction with includes the second unique tracking identifier to track the second mail piece delivery status within the USPS, a second date for the second postage purchase transaction, and the second mail piece delivery status associated with the second unique tracking identifier logically linked to the second unique postage indicium;

associating the information stored for the first indexed postage purchase transaction and the information stored for the second indexed postage purchase transaction with a user account at the postage-issuing computer system;

retrieving [[the]] information associated with stored for the first indexed postage purchase transaction from the database in response to the postage-issuing computer system receiving a refund inquiry for the first postage purchase transaction, wherein the retrieved information associated with retrieved for the first indexed postage purchase transaction from the database includes the first mail piece delivery status associated with the first unique tracking identifier logically linked to the first unique postage indicium and the first date associated with [[for]] the first indexed postage purchase transaction; and

refunding the first postage purchase transaction in response to determining that the first mail piece delivery status associated with the first unique tracking identifier indicates that the USPS has not delivered a mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier and that the first date associated with [[for]] the first indexed postage purchase transaction is the same as the second date associated with [[for]] the second indexed postage purchase transaction.

16. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 15, wherein:

~~wherein the database further associates information stored for the first indexed postage purchase transaction further includes with~~ a first destination zip code, a first service class, a first postage amount, and the first unique postage indicium logically linked to [[for]] the first ~~postage purchase transaction~~ unique tracking identifier;

~~wherein the database further associates information stored for the second indexed postage purchase transaction further includes with~~ a second destination zip code, a second service class, a second postage amount, and the second unique postage indicium logically linked to [[for]] the second ~~postage purchase transaction~~ unique tracking identifier; and

~~wherein the first postage purchase transaction is refunded only in response to further determining that the first destination zip code, the first service class, and the first postage amount associated with [[for]] the first indexed postage purchase transaction are the same as the second destination zip code, the second service class, and the second postage amount associated with [[for]] the second indexed postage purchase transaction.~~

17. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 15, further comprising:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with one or more of the first unique tracking identifier or the second unique identifier from the USPS, wherein the confirmatory delivery status information indicates whether the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier or another mail piece carrying the second unique tracking identifier; and

updating one or more of the first mail piece delivery status associated with the first indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier or the second mail piece delivery status associated with the second indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier in the database with the confirmatory delivery status information received from the USPS.

18. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 15, further comprising:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the first unique tracking identifier from the USPS in response to the USPS processing the mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier and reading the first unique tracking identifier carried on the mail piece; and

updating the first mail piece delivery status associated with the first indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier to indicate that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier.

19. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 15, wherein the refund inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing computer system.

20. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 15, wherein the refund inquiry is received from an end user computer associated with the user account over a communications links connecting the end user computer with the postage-issuing computer system.

21. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 18, further comprising:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the second unique identifier from the USPS in response to the USPS processing another mail piece carrying the second unique tracking identifier and reading the second unique tracking identifier carried on the other mail piece; and

updating the second mail piece delivery status associated with the second indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier to indicate that the USPS has delivered the other mail piece carrying the second unique tracking identifier.

22. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 15, further comprising:

denying the refund inquiry in response to determining that the first mail piece delivery status associated with the first indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier indicates that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier; [[and]] or

denying the refund inquiry in response to determining that the first date [[for]] associated with the first indexed postage purchase transaction and the second date [[for]] associated with the second indexed postage purchase transaction are different.

23. **(Currently Amended)** A method for issuing refunds for misprints of mail pieces, comprising:

generating, at a postage-issuing computer system, a first unique postage indicium in response to receiving a first request for a first postage purchase transaction, wherein the first unique postage indicium is logically linked to contains a first unique tracking identifier to track a first mail piece delivery status within the United States Postal Service (USPS);

indexing storing information for the first postage purchase transaction with the first unique tracking identifier logically linked to the first unique postage indicium in a database coupled to the postage-issuing computer system, wherein the database associates information stored for the first indexed postage purchase transaction with includes the first unique tracking identifier to track the first mail piece delivery status within the USPS, a first date for the first postage purchase transaction, a first destination zip code for the first postage purchase transaction, a first postage amount for the first postage purchase transaction, and the first mail piece delivery status associated with the first unique tracking identifier logically linked to the first unique postage indicium;

generating, at the postage-issuing computer system, a second unique postage indicium in response to receiving a second request for a second postage purchase transaction, wherein the second unique postage indicium is logically linked to contains a second unique tracking identifier to track a second mail piece delivery status within the United States Postal Service {USPS};

indexing storing information for the second postage purchase transaction with the second unique tracking identifier logically linked to the second unique postage indicium in the database, wherein the database associates information stored for the second indexed postage purchase transaction with includes the second unique tracking identifier to track the second mail piece delivery status within the USPS, a second date for the second postage purchase transaction, a second destination zip code for the second postage purchase transaction, a second postage amount for the second postage purchase transaction, and the second mail piece delivery status associated with the second unique tracking identifier logically linked to the second unique postage indicium;

searching the database for [[the]] information associated with stored for the first indexed postage purchase transaction and [[the]] information associated with stored for the second indexed postage purchase transaction in response to the postage-issuing computer system receiving a refund inquiry identifying one of the first postage purchase transaction or the second postage purchase transaction;

identifying the first indexed postage purchase transaction and the second indexed postage purchase transaction as duplicative postage purchase transactions in response to determining that the first date, the first destination zip code, and the first postage amount [[for]] associated with the first indexed postage purchase transaction are respectively identical to the second date, the second destination zip code, and the second postage amount [[for]] associated with the second indexed postage purchase transaction; and

refunding the first or the second postage purchase transaction identified in the refund inquiry in response to the first mail piece delivery status and the second mail piece delivery status indicating that the USPS has delivered a mail piece carrying only one of the first unique tracking identifier or the second unique tracking identifier associated with the duplicative postage purchase transactions.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, further comprising associating the information stored for the first indexed postage purchase transaction and the information stored for the second indexed postage purchase transaction with one or more user accounts at the postage-issuing computer system.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein:

wherein the database further associates information stored for the first indexed postage purchase transaction further includes with a first time, a first service class, a first mail piece weight, and the first unique postage indicium logically linked to [[for]] the first postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier; and

wherein the database further associates information stored for the second indexed postage purchase transaction further includes with a second time, a second service class, a second mail piece weight, and the second unique postage indicium logically linked to [[for]] the second postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, further comprising:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the first unique tracking identifier from the USPS in response to the USPS processing the mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier and reading the first unique tracking identifier carried on the mail piece;

updating the first mail piece delivery status associated with the first indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier to indicate that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier;

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the second unique identifier from the USPS in response to the USPS processing another mail piece carrying the second unique tracking identifier and reading the second unique tracking identifier carried on the other mail piece;

updating the second mail piece delivery status associated with the second indexed postage purchase transaction unique tracking identifier to indicate that the USPS has delivered the other mail piece carrying the second unique tracking identifier; and

denying the refund inquiry in response to updating the first mail piece delivery status and the second mail piece delivery status to indicate that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier and the other mail piece carrying the second unique tracking identifier.

28. (Currently Amended) A system for issuing refunds for misprints of mail pieces, comprising:

- a database coupled to a postage-issuing computer system;
- a communications link connecting the postage-issuing computer system with an end user computer;
- a master tracking computer system connected to the postage-issuing computer system through the communications link; and
- data processing circuitry that executes on the postage-issuing computer system, wherein executing the data processing circuitry on the postage-issuing computer system causes the postage-issuing computer system to:

- generate a plurality of unique postage indicia in response to receiving a plurality of requests for a plurality of postage purchase transactions, wherein ~~each~~ of the plurality of unique postage indicia are logically linked to contain respective unique tracking identifiers to track respective mail piece delivery statuses within the United States Postal Service (USPS);

- index store information for the plurality of postage purchase transactions with the respective unique tracking identifiers logically linked thereto in the database, wherein the database associates information stored for each of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions with includes the respective unique tracking identifiers to track the respective mail piece delivery statuses within the USPS and the mail piece

delivery statuses respectively associated with the respective unique tracking identifiers logically linked to the plurality of unique postage indicia;

retrieve [[the]] information associated with stored for the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions from the database in response to receiving a duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry;

identify two or more of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions as duplicative postage purchase transactions in response to determining that the respective unique postage indicia and unique tracking identifiers associated with [[for]] the two or more indexed duplicative postage purchase transactions are identical to [[with]] one another; and

determine that the respective identical unique postage indicia associated with one or more of the duplicative postage purchase transactions have not been used in response to the respective mail piece delivery statuses respectively associated with the one or more duplicative postage purchase transactions indicating that the USPS has not delivered a mail piece carrying the identical unique tracking identifier associated with the one or more duplicative postage purchase transactions.

29. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 28, wherein executing the data processing circuitry on the postage-issuing computer system further causes the postage-issuing computer system to:

request confirmatory delivery status information associated with one or more of the respective unique tracking identifiers logically linked to the plurality of unique postage indicia from the master tracking computer system;

receive the requested confirmatory delivery status information associated with the one or more respective unique tracking identifiers from the master tracking computer system, wherein the confirmatory delivery status information indicates whether the USPS has delivered one or more mail pieces carrying the one or more respective unique tracking identifiers; and

update the mail piece delivery statuses respectively associated with one or more of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions indexed with the one or more respective

unique tracking identifiers in the database with the confirmatory delivery status information received from the master tracking computer system.

30. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 28, wherein executing the data processing circuitry on the postage-issuing computer system further causes the postage-issuing computer system to associate ~~the information stored for~~ the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions with one or more user accounts.

31. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 28, wherein the retrieved information associated with ~~stored for each of~~ the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions ~~further~~ includes respective dates and the respective unique postage indicia respectively associated with ~~for each of~~ the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions.

32. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 28, wherein the retrieved information associated with ~~stored for each of~~ the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions ~~further~~ includes respective dates, respective times, respective destination zip codes, respective service classes, respective postage amounts, respective mail piece weights, and the respective unique postage indicia respectively associated with ~~for each of~~ the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions.

33. **(Currently Amended)** A method for issuing refunds for misprints of mail pieces, comprising:

generating, at a postage-issuing computer system, a plurality of unique postage indicia in response to receiving a plurality of requests for a plurality of postage purchase transactions, wherein ~~each of~~ the plurality of unique postage indicia are logically linked to contain respective unique tracking identifiers to track respective mail piece delivery statuses within the United States Postal Service (USPS);

indexing ~~storing~~ information for the plurality of postage purchase transactions with the respective unique tracking identifiers logically linked thereto in a database coupled to the

postage-issuing computer system, wherein the database associates information stored for each of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions with includes the respective unique tracking identifiers to track the respective mail piece delivery statuses within the USPS and the mail piece delivery statuses respectively associated with the respective unique tracking identifiers logically linked to the plurality of unique postage indicia;

retrieving [[the]] information associated with stored for the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions from the database in response to the postage-issuing computer system receiving a duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry;

identifying two or more of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions as duplicative postage purchase transactions in response to determining that the respective unique postage indicia and unique tracking identifiers associated with [[for]] the two or more indexed duplicative postage purchase transactions are identical to [[with]] one another; and

determining that the respective identical unique postage indicia associated with one or more of the duplicative postages purchase transactions have not been used in response to the respective mail piece delivery statuses respectively associated with the one or more duplicative postage purchase transactions indicating that the USPS has not delivered a mail piece carrying the identical unique tracking identifier associated with the one or more duplicative postage purchase transactions.

34. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 33, further comprising displaying the retrieved information associated with stored for the duplicative postage purchase transactions at the postage-issuing computer system in response to the duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry.

35. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 33, further comprising refunding [[the]] one or more of the duplicative postage purchase transactions associated with the unused identical unique postage indicia that have not been used.

36. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 33, further comprising displaying the retrieved information associated with stored for the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions at the postage-issuing computer system in response to the duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry.

37. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 33, wherein the database further associates information stored for each of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions with further includes respective dates, respective destination zip codes, respective service classes, respective postage amounts, and the respective unique postage indicia respectively associated with for each of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions.

38. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 33, further comprising:

requesting confirmatory delivery status information associated with one or more of the respective unique tracking identifiers logically linked to the plurality of unique postage indicia from a master tracking computer system connected to the postage-issuing computer system through a communications link;

receiving the requested confirmatory delivery status information associated with the one or more respective unique tracking identifiers from the master tracking computer system, wherein the confirmatory delivery status information indicates whether the USPS has delivered one or more mail pieces carrying the one or more respective unique tracking identifiers; and

updating the mail piece delivery statuses respectively associated with the one or more of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions indexed with the one or more respective unique tracking identifiers in the database with the confirmatory delivery status information received from the master tracking computer system.

39. (Cancelled)

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing computer system.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry is received from an end user computer over a communications links connecting the end user computer with the postage-issuing computer system.

42. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 33, further comprising:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with one or more of the ~~respective~~ unique tracking identifiers from the USPS in response to the USPS processing the one or more mail pieces carrying the one or more ~~respective~~ unique tracking identifiers and reading the one or more unique tracking identifiers carried on the ~~respective~~ one or more mail pieces; and

updating the mail piece delivery statuses respectively associated with one or more of the plurality of indexed postage purchase transactions indexed with the one or more unique tracking identifiers to indicate that the USPS has delivered the ~~respective~~ one or more mail pieces carrying the one or more unique tracking identifiers.

43. (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 45, wherein executing the data processing circuitry on the postage-issuing computer system further causes the postage-issuing computer system to filter out the refunded one or more duplicative postage purchase transactions that received the refund from the duplicative postage purchase transactions to prevent the filtered one or more duplicative postage purchase transactions that received the refund from receiving multiple refunds.

45. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 28, wherein executing the data processing circuitry on the postage-issuing computer system further causes the postage-issuing computer system to refund [[the]] one or more of the duplicative postage purchase transactions associated with the unused identical unique postage indicia that have not been used.

46-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Currently Amended) A method for issuing refunds for misprints of mail pieces, comprising:

generating, at a postage-issuing computer system, a unique postage indicium in response to receiving a request for a postage purchase transaction, wherein the unique postage indicium is logically linked to contains a unique tracking identifier to track a mail piece delivery status within the United States Postal Service (USPS);

retrieving information indexed with stored for the unique tracking identifier postage purchase transaction from a database coupled to the postage-issuing computer system in response to the postage-issuing computer system receiving a refund inquiry associated with [[for]] the unique postage purchase transaction indicium logically linked to the unique tracking identifier, wherein the information retrieved for the postage purchase transaction from the database includes the mail piece delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier logically linked to the unique postage indicium;

refunding the postage purchase transaction associated with the unique postage indicium in response to the mail piece delivery status associated with the unique tracking

identifier logically linked thereto indicating that the USPS has not delivered a mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier;

checking for a change in the mail piece delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier logically linked to the unique postage indicium in response to refunding the postage purchase transaction, wherein the postage-issuing computer system checks for the change in the mail piece delivery status during a period of time after the postage purchase transaction has been refunded; and

forwarding an alert to the USPS in response to the mail piece delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier logically linked to the unique postage indicium changing during the period of time after the postage purchase transaction has been refunded.

49-54. (Cancelled)

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the period of time comprises a predetermined number of days.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the period of time comprises a predetermined number of months.